

**GEAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF MENTAL HEALTH
AND RECOVERY SERVICES**

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Chairman of the Board

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Board Minutes

August 19, 2026

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Melody Coniglio, Reba Dykes, James Lee Holden, Kathy Johnson, Steven Oluic, Patricia Varanese

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Douglas Lundblad

STAFF PRESENT: Christine Lakomiak, Jim Mausser, Michelle Maneage, Teresa Slater

GUESTS: Kathy Franz (League of Women Voters Geauga), Paul Bolino (Ravenwood Health), Andrea Gutka (WomenSafe), Mary Wynne-Peaspanen (Signature Health), Angi Daugherty (Family Pride)

I. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Oluic called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. Mr. Holden called the roll for attendance and the following Board members were present: Melody Coniglio, Reba Dykes, James Lee Holden, Kathy Johnson, Steven Oluic, Patricia Varanese. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

II. SWEARING IN OF BOARD MEMBERS FOR A FOUR-YEAR TERM EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2026:

- a. James Lee Holden – Ohio Department of Behavioral Health
- b. Kathy Johnson – Geauga County Board of Commissioners
- c. Melody Coniglio – Geauga County Board of Commissioners
- d. David Fabig – Geauga County Board of Commissioners

The Oath of Office was delivered to Mr. Holden, Ms. Johnson and Ms. Coniglio by Teresa Slater, Notary Public. Mr. Fabig was unable to attend and will be sworn in at the next meeting.

III. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman Oluic welcomed the new and returning Board members. He shared that he attended the LOSS Team event with the butterfly release and said it was very meaningful and impactful. Chairman Oluic reported he has another engagement this evening and will need to leave at 6:30. Vice Chairman Johnson will serve as Acting Chair for the remainder of the meeting. The agenda was amended in order to address the items that need to be voted on by the Board before Chairman Oluic's departure.

IV. BOARD REVIEW AND ACTION ITEMS

a. Acknowledgment of Geauga County Single Audit for Calendar Year 2024

The Board is reviewed as part of the State of Ohio's audit of Geauga County. Jim Mausser distributed the portions of the audit relevant to the Board and advised that a link to the complete countywide audit is available. The audit identified two findings, neither of which involved the Board: A qualified opinion regarding a major federal coronavirus funding program because the County did not submit three of the four required reports; and a significant deficiency related to the auditor's reporting of property taxes, which resulted in an understatement that had not yet been corrected through financial entries.

b. Resolution 26-08-1 SFY2027 Ohio 988 Awareness Project Mini-Grant

Mr. Holden moved to approve the Resolution. Ms. Johnson seconded the motion. Discussion: This is the third year the Board had the opportunity to apply for a mini grant for 988. Boards could request up to \$5,000.00 to promote 988. A grant was submitted and the Board was awarded \$4,689.87. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-6; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

c. Financial Reports

Mr. Mausser presented the financial reports for June and July, and highlighted the following:

- For SFY2026, 97.6% of the administrative budget was expended.
- In July of SFY2027, 8.7% of the administrative budget was expended. It was noted that as a result of the Transitional Living Center expansion, the insurance on the building increased significantly and the cost was higher than anticipated for this fiscal year. Mr. Mausser is hopeful that any over-expenditure in the insurance line this year will be offset by other line items that won't be spent down. He will inform the Board if funds need to be transferred from unencumbered reserves for this purpose.
- The County Calendar Year Budget shows expenditures of just over \$4.42 million through July.
- The Auditor's Fund Balance at the end of July was just over \$1.95 million.
- Voucher Recap 720 for June 2026 in the amount of \$314,661.29.
- Voucher Recap 721 for July 2026 in the amount of \$1,162,806.96.
- There was approximately \$17,000.00 in the SFY2026 budget that was not expended.

V. NEW BUSINESS

a. Facility Assessment and Capital Reserve Plan Discussion

Staff received four proposals to have a professional facility review of board-owned properties for the purpose of providing a current assessment of each property; the assessment includes an estimated life expectancy of each item, a replacement schedule, and an estimated cost for a ten-year capital reserves plan. Staff are ready to make a recommendation if the Board wishes to move forward. As an example, the board building is over 30 years old. Recently, an estimate was received to repair an AC unit at a cost of \$900.00; the decision was made to replace the 30-year-old furnace/AC unit instead of repairing it. Director Lakomiak said the staff is recommending Lakeland Construction, as they provided the most comprehensive proposal. Lakeland oversaw construction of the Geauga Independent Apartments. They were in the mid-range of the quotes that were received. Lakeland will coordinate a comprehensive

site inspection of each property, including architectural, civil, structural, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems. The other proposals either did not include that component, or stated that there would be an additional charge, but did not include that estimated cost. Chairman Oluic reported reserves were a topic at several county budget meetings. Reserves are being scrutinized with the idea that some entities have too much money held in reserve. Facility assessments have also been discussed at budget meetings. Director Lakomiak reiterated this will be a ten-year replacement/update schedule outlining how our reserve funds will be used. The capital reserve plan will also serve as a starting point for the Board to discuss anticipated and unforeseen expenses before they become an emergency. Chairman Oluic recommended the Board vote on this tonight instead of waiting another month.

Resolution 26-08-2 Facility Assessment/Capital Plan for Board-Owned Properties: Mr. Holden moved to approve the Resolution. Ms. Varanese seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-6; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

Chairman Oluic commented that the Transitional Living Center rebuild was a major success. This foundational document will provide momentum for other projects that can help more people. Director Lakomiak said the Board receives some funds for upgrades, repairs and improvements at the apartments. This report will help the Board plan more effectively with those funds.

b. Friends of the LOSS Team Funding Request

Director Lakomiak received a funding request from the LOSS Team for \$2,500. If approved, the funds will come from the discretionary line item and will be used to hire an individual to formalize policies and procedures outside the normal scope of business. Historically, the Board has provided funding to the LOSS Team; however, they have not requested any money for the last two years, as they found other funds to meet their needs. Mr. Holden asked who is in charge of the group. Director Lakomiak responded, Deputy Tracy Jordan. The Board funds the Crisis Director, but the LOSS Team is a separate 501(c) (3) organization under the Sheriff's Office. The LOSS Team is volunteer-driven and provides immediate support and intervention to families who are affected by suicide or other traumatic events. Chairman Oluic commented that the LOSS Team is high-functioning and an asset to the county. The VFW donates to the LOSS Team at least annually. Mr. Holden suggested having someone at the Sheriff's Office write the policies and procedures. Director Lakomiak responded that the LOSS Team is a separate entity and does not share staff with the Sheriff's Office. She is recommending that the Board help with this expense. Ms. Johnson moved to approve the expenditure. Ms. Dykes seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. **VOICE VOTE: AYES-6; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.** Director Lakomiak reported she recently learned of a grant opportunity the Board will be applying for toward the LOSS Team for this purpose. Any grant funds awarded will be expended before using Board funds.

c. Transfer of Properties into Board's Current Name

When applying for a credit card, staff encountered challenges finding documents with the Board's current name. There were many different name variations. Many things weren't changed officially. After discussion with Assistant Prosecutor Susan Wieland, she prepared two quit-claim deeds that, when recorded, will transfer both parcels of land into the Board's current name. Ms. Dykes moved to authorize Director Lakomiak to execute the quit-claim deeds for the purpose stated. Ms. Coniglio seconded the motion. **VOICE VOTE: AYES-6; NAYS-0; ABSECTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

d. Board Committees Discussion

Last fiscal year, the Board chose to keep the committee structure in the Bylaws and convene only when needed, but instead of using a committee structure, business would go before the full board. Director Lakomiak asked how the Board would like to proceed this fiscal year. Chairman Oluic feels the Board has been operating very efficiently without all the extra meetings. It was decided to keep the committee structure as is and revisit the matter if necessary.

e. Appointment of Nominating Committee

Director Lakomiak reminded the Board that the current executive committee was kept in place until board members were appointed for the current fiscal year. Chairman Oluic will appoint a nominating committee so that a new slate of officers can be voted on before the end of the year.

Chairman Oluic left the meeting at 6:30 PM. Vice Chairman Johnson served as Acting Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

VI. APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES FROM JUNE 17, 2026

Mr. Holden moved to waive the reading of the minutes and approve them as presented. Ms. Dykes seconded the motion. There was no discussion. **VOICE VOTE: AYES-5; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

VII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Lakomiak provided the following updates:

Welcome new board members:

David Fabig and Melody Coniglio were appointed by the Commissioners. Director Lakomiak met with each before their appointments and again for orientation afterward. Ms. Johnson was reappointed by the Commissioners. Mr. Holden was reappointed by the Ohio Department of Behavioral Health. There remains a county vacancy for an individual with lived experience of addiction.

Statewide:

An executive order by the Governor tasked the Ohio Department of Behavioral Health with the responsibility for oversight and certification of recovery housing, in coordination with boards statewide. Director Lakomiak supports the increased oversight, citing a 400% rise in recovery housing to more than 1,700 homes, along with reports of illegal operations, poor living conditions, and failure to meet standards at some non-certified facilities. One such home in Geauga County has since closed. All seven recovery homes in the county are certified and performing well. The new oversight should strengthen complaint investigations, although the future role of Ohio Recovery Housing remains unclear. The Ohio Department of Behavioral Health has proposed new regulations for recovery housing residences.

Overdose Awareness Grant Flyer:

The Board received a \$35,276.25 grant to host an event on August 31st called Every Life Matters for International Overdose Awareness Day. This grant has been secured each year Director Lakomiak has been here.

988 Mini Grant:

A \$4,689.87 grant was awarded to the Board by the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities to promote 988.

988/911 Interoperability Project:

Geauga County has been selected by Peg's Foundation as one of five Ohio communities to participate in the inaugural Clear Pathways 911/988 Interoperability Technical Assistance Project. After the selection became official, Director Lakomiak notified the Board, and the initiative was featured in several statewide and local news articles. The program aims to expand throughout Ohio and eventually nationwide. Geauga County has already been working independently to coordinate 911 and 988 services for about a year.

Suicide and Accidental Deaths in 2026:

There were three deaths in June and July, with ages ranging from 21 to 53 years. There has been one overdose death ruled in 2026; a few other cases are undergoing toxicology reviews. There were 37 crisis incident callouts in July; 22 were hospital transports and/or emergency evaluations. Tragically, two of the calls resulted in suicide. Almost half of the crisis calls involved individuals under 25; 988 was the entry point for 35 of the calls, highlighting coordinated diversion across many systems; people in every age group were affected, from 11 to 80 years of age.

Events and Trainings:

Amish Safety Day: There were more than 700 attendees. The Board's partnership with the Farm Bureau helped make this connection. Michelle Manage reported having many great discussions; many parents were interested in learning about resources.

One Geauga/LOSS Team Butterfly Release and Picnic: This event was well attended; several board members were able to participate.

Crisis Response/Disaster Response Team: 16 new members were trained; 27 attended as a refresher training.

The Pit Stop Program:

Melody Coniglio, transportation director for West Geauga, invited Director Lakomiak to present behavioral health information to bus drivers during an August 13 in-service day. Ms. Coniglio developed the Pit Stop Program, which initially placed a designated safe seat on three buses where students could pause, regroup, and speak with a trusted adult. Drawing on her experience with developmental disabilities, she designed the program to support all students, including those with special education needs. Director Lakomiak emphasized that drivers do not need to solve every problem; they can listen, recognize when a student may need help, and connect families with resources such as 988 and the MRSS team. Drivers responded positively and requested additional training in community resources, noting their awareness of family circumstances. Angela North also provided nonclinical QPR training. Director Lakomiak believes the model could be replicated elsewhere in Ohio.

Overdose Awareness Event:

The Overdose Awareness Event will be held at the Board office on August 31 from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. in an open-house format. The office will serve as a resource hub offering naloxone kits, information on AA, NA, and local services, recovery planners, hygiene products for recovery homes, and education on safe medication practices to reduce misuse. Partner agencies and providers will contribute resources and staff to assist attendees, including families seeking guidance on how to support a loved one with addiction.

Professional Training Opportunities:

Case Western Reserve University: The Substance Use Disorder Center of Excellence will present Ethics and Boundaries: Maintaining Professional Integrity in Behavioral Health in person on August 27, 2026, at the Board administrative offices.

NOVA Training: Geauga County has been selected as a training site for the National Organization for Victim Advocacy. Participants will learn de-escalation, trauma-informed approaches, how to connect individuals with appropriate support and resources, and how to share and talk about trauma. Director Lakomiak took this training online because it is not often conducted in person. Hopefully, the county will receive a grant to offset some of the cost.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

There was no Old Business discussed.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Those present in the audience introduced themselves.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Holden moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Coniglio seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 PM.